

2019 / 2020 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

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SOCIETY WEB PAGE ADDRESS <u>http://www.carnbreaminingsociety.org.uk</u>

We have a Facebook page, please see us at

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1395102940806265/

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 SUBSCRIPTIONS:- If there is a red cross in this box your subscription may still be due

 £18.00
 Single membership

 £25.00
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Front Cover Drawing by David Froggatt

Chairman's Report By Tony Brooks

This is my third stint as chairman. In my first Chairman's Remarks, in the June 1981 newsletter (number 8), I mentioned that we had a new newsletter editor and that it was intended to continue publication on a six-monthly basis. Thirty-eight years later we are still producing two newsletters a year, we still have a full and varied programme and we still have a strong membership. Not bad going!

That newsletter contained an article by Lawrence Holmes on Botallack, one by Frank Kneebone on Castle an Dinas and one by me on King Edward Mine. Those three authors appear again in this issue of the newsletter. Botallack was our big project for several years and now our main project is Great Condurrow Mine.

The chairman is only in post for two years. This prevents the chairman getting delusion of grandeur. Decisions are made by the Committee - the chairman is just that - the person who chairs committee meetings (three per year) and the evening meetings.

The Society is only as good as its membership. We need new faces on our Committee. The jobs, such as they are, are not onerous and you will not be asked to do something that you do not want to do.

Summary of the Treasurer's Report for AGM April 2019 By Jon Nurhonen

We had a surplus of £258.52 over the financial year. Subscriptions were up on the previous year and this was countered somewhat by an increase in speakers' fees.

A reminder that the £100 to the Friends of King Edward Mine entitles card holders to free entry at King Edward Mine and a discount for purchases made in the mine shop.

As the Society's finances are in a healthy state there is no need at this point to raise subscription rates. Hopefully all current members will renew their subscriptions for the next year.

Notes from the Editor

Tony Brooks

My job as Editor is to collect and collate articles written by members and other contributors. To make my task easier I ask contributors to submit their articles in the following format. Word document, font Times New Roman, point size 12. Illustrations should be placed in the text approximately where the author would like to have them printed. Please <u>do not</u> wrap the text around the image. We will do that, if necessary, at the publishing stage.

HERODSFOOT MINE

By Derek Stonley

Deep in the valley of the West Looe River, it comes as a surprise to find the remains of former mining activity, close to the village of Herodsfoot. This is an agricultural landscape of rich pastures, sheltered slopes and thick woodland, well away from the high granite moors with their evidence of past

upheavals of magma and the associated mineral lodes of Cornwall's traditional mining districts. The farmland around Herodsfoot is underlain by a broad belt of Devonian age slates – the "*killas*" of the Cornish miner – folded by tectonic processes and cut by north-south trending faults or crush zones.

The West Looe River has eroded deeply into one of these crush zones at Herodsfoot, exposing on the steep valley slopes brilliant white fragments of quartz and calcite veinstones, easy to follow against the dun-coloured *killas*. There are more in the gravels of the swift little tributary streams tumbling down from the west. Although records barely exist, it is reputedly over three hundred years since prospecting for the source of the veinstones made encouraging finds; mining, not for tin or copper, but of lead and silver, began in 1700.

The most productive Cornish tin and copper lodes, genetically associated with the granites, form in roughly parallel, close-spaced groups that trend ENE – WSW, enabling many former mining enterprises to exploit a number of different lodes within their setts; lead-silver lodes almost always run north-south, well away from the granites in *killas* country, and come singly within the confines of the fault zones. Interest in the early diggings at Herodsfoot was renewed in the 1840s as the price of lead rose, and a great lode was discovered, leading to the formation of a new company. By 1851 over two hundred people were employed, many walking in from the Liskeard area where the initial boom of the Caradon mining district had attracted labour from all over Cornwall. Herodsfoot expanded considerably, with three pubs being established, along with a brothel, and All Saints church of 1850 that looked down from the heights of the eastern side of the valley over the village's rackety new flock.

The new discovery was pursued actively, with a shaft that ultimately was mined to the 150-fathom level and equipped with a 45-inch pumping engine. Developing southwards from the old workings, the miners lost their vein system in a chaotic belt of slides within the fault zone, but the persistence of the management was rewarded when they emerged from the barren area to find higher-grade mineralisation with substantially better silver content; this formed the basis of what was in effect an entirely new section of the mine, which sustained production for the next twenty years. New Engine shaft was partly mined upwards towards the surface¹, where in 1865 a 60-inch pumping engine was installed. The shaft was ultimately developed to the 215-fathom level, and the ground extensively stoped to this depth. However, during the unusually wet winter of 1882, part of the old northern workings collapsed and flooded, the water completely inundating the active, deeper, southern section. It took months to pump the water out, and the adverse economic impact brought an end to large-scale working in 1884. Over 19,000 tons of 71% lead ore and 616,500oz of silver had been produced from nearly a mile along the lode, and over £49,000 in dividends distributed².

Herodsfoot Mine remains a celebrated locality today. Along the line of lode, there are open fissures – *vugs* in Cornish miners' parlance, the voids of which allowed the growth of large crystals of various minerals along the sides to form veritable Aladdin's grottoes of specimens. The most remarkable were of the mineral bournonite, a sulphide of copper, lead and antimony – CuPbSbS₂ – also known as endellionite, from St Endellion where it was first identified³; bournonite crystallises in a characteristic "cogwheel" morphology, termed "wheel ore" by miners. Specimens became known to Richard Talling, a former shoemaker turned mineral dealer, who ran a "Fancy Repository" in nearby Lostwithiel. During the 1850s and 1860s, he managed to obtain the finest cogwheel crystals of bournonite from Herodsfoot, reputedly making such a nuisance of himself underground that he had to buy shares in the mine to forestall attempts to deny him entry. The best specimens were sold to the British Museum⁴, while the Royal Cornwall Museum also has fine examples. Talling committed suicide in 1883, his executor becoming a mineral dealer himself to disperse the stock remaining in the repository.

Today, thanks to the internet, mineral specimens are traded worldwide. A query via Google for "bournonite crystals for sale" will bring up a long list of sites and range of prices with, perhaps unsurprisingly, a good supply of smallish, cheap specimens from China. However, Herodsfoot cogwheels, almost all collected by Talling, command high prices due to their exceptional size and quality. They are described as "classic" crystals, their supply being finite and their provenance impeccable. Go to <u>www.minfind.com⁵</u> and if you have \$8,500 to burn, a top specimen of Herodsfoot cogwheels can be yours.



Herodsfoot Mine engine house ruins on New Engine Shaft. All Saints church is across the valley.

References.

1. Barton, D.B. The Mines and Mineral Railways of East Cornwall and West Devon. D. Bradford Barton Ltd. p26. 1964.

2. Dines, H.G. The Metalliferous Mining Region of South-West England. Vol.2 p616. HMSO 1956.

- 3. Read, H.H. Rutley's Elements of Mineralogy. 24th edition, p236. Thomas Morby & Co. 1948.
- 4. www.mineralogicalrecord.com/label
- 5. www.minfind.com

The Boy in the Dark by K McKechnie

Book Review by Lawrence Holmes

Published by Redgate Books in 2016. 252 pages text only (no photos or maps). Price £7.99. The book is an unusual drama novel about metal mining in east Cornwall. The back page of the book accurately describes the story thus: -

Cornwall 1858, a boy descends alone into the darkness of Wheal Emma copper mine, tormented by the mystery of his father's tragic death. What clues lie hidden in his father's mining journal? Who are the sinister others in the dark? Who else is plotting to unlock the secrets of the mine? And who really profits from the miner's back breaking toil? This is a beautifully told, skilfully plotted, authentic period

thriller. A tale of loss and discovery, loyalty and treachery, poverty, hardship, and riches. The book weaves a gripping story around an accurate portrayal of the struggles of Cornish men, women and children whose labours made staggering fortunes for speculators, landowner and the aristocracy.

I am a slow reader but I read this book in a week, in fact I could not put it down! The whole book is written in the present tense which took some getting used to but, in the end, makes the story line more immediate. Through its pages pass bal maidens, tributers, tutworkers, mine captains, mineral lords and their agents, London speculators and adventurers. The minerals are real, the copper shines like gold and the mines are wet, dank and there is the smell of sweat, tallow, black powder and pasties. There are the sounds as well, of clanking engines, banging hammers, raised Count House voices over stewed mutton and strong mine punch, raging winds, chattering workers on dressing floors, dripping water and there is silence!



The story follows shrewd, attractive, Grace Pascoe and her young son Thomas soon to be a fullyfledged miner, a father's death and a book that tells of lodes and levels and fortunes that could be won. Even a miner's dial takes centre stage for a while, as Thomas tries to unravel the secrets of his father's coded writings. Then there are, leases and lawyers, magistrates, accusations, sentences and the dreadful Bodmin Goal. The climax is murder, murder in the mine, and death in the mine. How does it all turn out? Well you will have to buy or borrow a copy of this fascinating and well written book to find out.

Winston Graham and E V Thompson, to name only two, have both written mining type novels, but mining tends to be only a part of their story line. Ken McKechnie has written an exciting novel which features very realistic mining situations virtually from start to finish. I for one never thought I would find a book like this one!

Ken McKechnie spoke to our Society in November 2018 about his international mining career and many other things. He now lives in Devon and writes novels.

British Archaeology Sept/Oct 2018

It was reported recently in the journal *British Archaeology* that an antler pick found in 1790, 12 metres down in an alluvial tin mine in the Carnon Valley, has been given a radiocarbon date of 1620 to 1495 BC. The pick has long been displayed in Truro Museum. Simon Timberlake, who arranged the dating, says there are short parallel cuts on the handle that look like tally marks and that the date matches what was expected but had never been proved about the earliest exploitation of tin in Cornwall.

Castle an Dinas Wartime Wolfram Contracts By Tony Brooks

Two letters have come to light which give us some information on this.

By the beginning of 1940 the development on No.4 level, or adit level, had been extended southwards for practically the full length of the ore deposit as exposed in the upper levels and reserves of stoping ground were nearly exhausted. In order to search for parallel orebodies and to understand the structure of the granite on and below No.4 level a vigorous diamond drilling programme was instituted.

The drilling programme proved that there were no parallel lodes within the distances bored. It was concluded that the wolfram occurred in the lode close to the granite, and that the lode in the killas below No.4 level should contain payable ore.

The company had put off committing themselves to the capital expenditure of deepening the mine. Financially it would be a risk considering the instability of the wolfram price, the massive expansion of Chinese production in the late 1930s and, above all, the lack of any defined ore reserves below No.4 level. However, by 1941, the national need for wolfram and the high price then being offered demanded an immediate sinking programme if the mine were to stay in production. Work started on sinking South Shaft in early November 1941.

May 1942 – Letter from the Ministry of Supply to South Crofty Ltd. Contract to take all Castle an Dinas wolfram at a price of $60/-(\pounds 3)$ per unit¹. This was for ore containing a minimum of 65% WO₃.

June 1943 – Letter from the Ministry of Supply to Metal Traders Ltd. - I am directed to confirm the information given in a letter from the Non-Ferrous Minerals Development Control of the Ministry to South Crofty Ltd., dated 5th June, that the Ministry is prepared to pay 100/- per unit, for the sale of Wolfram ore above adit level from the mine pending the completion of the new shaft.

As was stated in *extracted* the above letter this did not apply to the ore obtained from the new shaft. This contract then allowed the mine to work what would otherwise have been sub-economic ore above adit. As the mine did not routinely sample the grade of the ore in situ it is not clear how they could have worked out the relative amounts of wolfram produced from above and below adit. Knowing the way that the mine was operated I suspect that there was some 'creative' accounting here!

The Carclase Tin Mine By David J Froggatt

A while ago I saw an antique print that was published 1835 entitled '*CARCLASE*¹² *TIN MINE, NEAR ST AUSTELL', produced from a steel engraving and hand coloured.* It was in superb condition and had to be added to my collection. On the left of the title was the name T. Allom. Thomas Allom was a renowned English architect, artist and topographical illustrator, who had produced stunning vistas including St. Michael's Mount, The Town of Bodmin and Fowey Harbour as well as stately homes such as Chatsworth and Eaton Hall.

¹ A long ton (2240 lbs) unit was defined as ore containing 1% WO₃. Thus a ton of ore containing 65% WO₃ would be worth 65 x $\pounds 3 = \pounds 180$.

² Note spelling of Carclase with an 's' It is usually spelt Carclaze - ed



Thomas Allom

The other name shown on the right of the title was that of W. Le Petit, being William Alexander Le Petit one of the finest producers of steel engravings who had also done engravings of many more Allom illustrations as well as other illustrators.

Carclaze was an open pit operation that had existed for around 400 years in total and was recorded in Grace's Guide as being the earliest mine in the region. It originally exploited a massive cassiterite vein and was the largest open pit mine extending one mile across and some 150 feet deep by 1870. It became a much-visited location in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and as a result the development of the mine was particularly well documented in a number of contemporary accounts and illustrations.



One early account was by a French man, M. Jars who visited the pit in 1765, and later, in 1829, detailed geographical maps and sectional drawings were made by the two Germans, von Oeynhausen and von Dechen.

One description, dated September 1810 by Joseph Farrington, is interesting, which read:

I went to Carclaze Tin mine, two miles distant (from St Austell) and made a sketch of the interior, it being an open mine, a vast chasm in which mining is carried out on, and the depth is very considerable. This was my second visit to the mine, in which I made a drawing in October last. Having fixed upon another situation for the same purpose, I sat down and commenced a sketch under very unfavourable

circumstances. I had to endure a cold North wind with the apprehension of rain. In this predicament I experienced great kindness and respect from those of the miners who were working near me. One of them drew his thick waistcoat over me to protect me against the cold, another held my umbrella over me, and thus I was enabled to remain a considerable time, but at last the cold which had chilled me much got the better of my desire to proceed and I took my leave of my kind assistants sooner than I would willingly have done.

Following the price of tin collapsing in the 1860s, Carclaze was found to contain huge quantities of china clay. As a result many miners, throughout Cornwall who had been forced to move as mines had started to close, began to move into the area as production at Carclaze moved from tin to china clay.

The white pyramids of waste from the china clay pits around St. Austell began to be grassed following the Aberfan disaster in order to stabilize them, however, one of the exceptions to this was the tip from the Carclaze mine.

There have been many illustrations of the mine during the period of tin extraction, but the Allom/Le Petit example is perhaps one of the finest.

Editor's note: David Froggatt has donated two illustrations to the Society to be sold:

- *1. The original 1830 print of Carclaze as shown in the article above.*
- 2. The original of the drawing that appears on the front cover of this newsletter.

Bids to be sent to David Burkitt – The Barn, Newmill Lane, Truro TR4 9EU <u>burkitt962@btinternet.com</u> All proceeds to go to support the work at Great Condurrow

The Great North Caradon Silver Lead and Copper Mining Company Ltd vs a 77-Year-old Widow By Geoff Purcell

The lady in question was Mary Abbott, who was born in Cambridgeshire and was widowed in 1872. From the 1871 Census she lived in Trethin tenement/farmhouse, with her 54-year-old widowed daughter Annie Joyce (born in London), her 20-year-old music-teacher/organist grandson Alfred Adkins (born in Olney, Bucks) and Sarah Tucker, their 53-year-old domestic servant from Frome Somerset. Mrs Abbott was dependent on the farm for her survival income.

My visit to the mine in June 2001 (as Trethin Mine) only revealed an adit by the River Camel,

water in the adit being 30-ins deep, which the then owner, Mrs Hine, said had been explored by a relative wearing a wet suit, and the wall of a 40-50 foot waterwheel pit. My notes at the time stated that the mine had a reputedly rich silver-lead lode, tried to about 14 fathoms depth, in approximately 1819, by shaft sinking but it had been abandoned due to water problems.

In 1869 the sett was taken up again, a waterwheel erected. and an adit (presumably the one I saw) driven a short distance, cutting a copper lode which produced several tons of ore and lead in 1870 when 25 men were employed. The owner, Mr Abbott from London, died in 1872 and another company, The Great North Caradon Silver Lead and Copper Mining Co Ltd., acquired the mine from Mrs Abbott by an indenture dated May 27, 1872. The licence to work the mine for 42 years from Sept 29, 1871 at 1/24th dues. The company was to pay £4,000 to Mrs Abbott to buy the mine and machinery, by means of 'a Debenture at 5% interest to be paid half yearly'.



1st Ed 25-inch O.S. Map. Waterwheel close to the river with a line of flat rod supports leading towards the shaft.

The company started a new shaft 7-ft x 14-ft within timbers and installed a 40-ft overshot waterwheel. Mrs Abbot later contrasted the price 'paid' to her with the $\pounds 17,000$ price shown in the company's balance sheet. Within a short while, lack of subsequent capital caused half of the workforce to leave in February 1874. The working entirely stopped early in March, with no production being recorded.

In 1876-77 the mine was owned by the Trethin Mining Co. Around 1912 a powerful 50-ft waterwheel was purchased from the defunct Bethin or Wheal Archer. GR SX 1031 8205

The Great North Caradon operation began with the company's incorporation in May 1872 with an authorised capital of $30,000 \pm 1$ shares, only 16,634 of which were taken up. As 10,000 were fully paid and 6634 only 17/6 it may be that the company directors were 'paying' themselves 10,000 free shares fully paid up to pass the mine from their own names to that of the company. Mrs Abbott had given an Indenture on 27.5.1872 to Charles Ross of 46 Elgin Road, St. Peters Park, Paddington (as trustee of the company), a licence to mine tin, copper, lead and other ores for 42 years from 29.9.1871. The issue of these shares might today be deemed as a dubious practice, especially as Mrs Abbott later discovered that the company accounts showed $\pm 17,000$ was charged for the mine purchase, but the company was to pay her $\pm 4,000$ for the purchase, secured by debentures dated 29.7.1872, payable on 1.8.1877, and bearing interest after the first year of 5% per annum payable half-yearly on 1st February and August annually i.e. Mrs Abbott did not even receive cash for the mine sale.

In legal papers of 12.6.1874 Mrs Abbott stated that the first debenture interest payment of £100 was unpaid on 1.2.1874 and that the company owed her £384 for damage to land. Additionally, she complained that the mine was not well and effectively worked and had been abandoned for 5 months, whereupon at her cost she placed 2 men on the mine. By this time a winding up petition had been presented to the Stannary Court by Francis Lambe Price, the company secretary, who claimed £112-10/- unpaid salary. To protect her own position Mrs Abbott considered it 'indispensable' that the winding up be by order of the Court and not a voluntary winding up and that the reason of the mine not having been worked in accordance with the sett covenants, the company being unable to raise new capital and being unable to pay its debts, and failing to fulfil conditions agreed with her, she was entitled to possession of the mine, buildings, machinery and materials. She also believed that the ordinary creditors were owed less than £120 but the directors and other officers were 'owed' over £500. Mrs Abbott considered she had been misled by the mine promoters and representations, resulting in a financial loss to her, and that she had been induced not to insist on immediate payment of the £4,000 purchase but to take Debentures instead. An experienced mine agent had told her that over £8,000 should have been spent on mining operations to date but she believed that the company had not spent £2,000.

After stating her beliefs and position, Mrs Abbott and her legal advisers became enmeshed in figures. Henry Sewell Stokes, her solicitor and legal adviser in Bodmin, stated that the plant and materials were on the mine at the time of granting the sett, implying that they did not originally belong to the company. He attended a meeting with the company's two solicitors in May 1874 when the latter proposed that Mrs Abbott take back the mine, and the plant and materials, and pay £600 towards the debts of the company, giving up her claim for interest, all this notwithstanding that the company had failed to pay for the mine. The response of Mrs Abbott was naturally wholly negative with regard to paying the company.

One month later John Henry Hamley was appointed official liquidator in the winding up under the provisions of the Companies Act 1862, and received a letter from Mrs Abbott's solicitor giving him notice that she, as a creditor for over £4,000, claimed entitlement to all of the machinery and plant at the mine belonging to the company. Shortly afterwards the Liquidator advertised the sett and those same assets for sale by tender. The Court meanwhile ordered that Mrs Abbott's £4,000 claim against the company should be paid by the Liquidator from the first proceeds of the sale of assets, both his costs and those of Mrs Abbott to be paid from company assets. Those assets would be nowhere near enough to cover all of these amounts.

There was only one tender submitted to Mr Hamley, £600 by Mrs Abbott. Preferential claims (e.g. miners' wages) were £31-12-10d, and with other winding up costs, the total to be paid out would be less than £400. Assets were put at £826-9-3d. The August 1874 legal submission by Hamley stated that Messrs. Hodge Hockin Marrack, solicitors for Mrs Abbott, had proposed a payment of £850 for sett, plant, machinery and materials, subject to:

- 1. £400 to be paid into the Court towards costs of liquidation, preferential claims and balance paid to Mrs Abbott on account of her claim as Debenture holder.
- 2. £450 balance to be retained by Mrs Abbott on account of her above claim
- 3. Sett to be handed to Mrs Abbott and possession given to her on paying into Court the £400.
- 4. Mrs Abbott's costs to be paid from company assets.
- 5. Assignment of the sett to be prepared by Mrs Abbott if required at her cost.

Mr Hamley said that the Court considered Mrs Abbott's claim to be a first charge on the company property and he accepted the terms of the offer.

In the winding up accounts of 8.5.1877, Mrs Abbott's payment of £400 was the largest in the total of $\pounds 681-16-5d$ sums received, whilst the payments out showed that she received as preferential creditor re Debentures £399-12-3d, and her costs of £3-2-10d. It would seem that that the mine assets which were on her property at the time of the granting of the sett stayed in Mrs Abbott's possession with only a small financial cost, and she was able to grant mining rights to another company – Trethin Mining Co. - in 1876-77, although her involvement with the Great North Caradon company did not provide her with the retirement income she had expected. Altogether not a bad outcome for a widow in her late 70's against London based company promoters who seem to have set out NOT to operate a mine.

The inference of shady goings on may be deduced from the following – the elaborate name of the company, particularly noting that a Cornish crow would fly 13 miles from Caradon Hill to reach the mine on the opposite side of Bodmin Moor. The company's 'trustees' negotiated a £4,000 mine purchase, but it was recorded as £17,000 in the company accounts, with presumably the 10,000 fully paid up shares issued by the company to those same 'trustees' who may have become the company directors.

Of those shareholders who were subject to the payment of calls i.e. initially paid only 17/6d for £1 shares, the largest 7 holdings (100 shares and over) totalled 2,500 shares with London or Surrey addresses. There may have been a deliberate attempt to recruit investors based in London. There was only one Cornish shareholder, a draper in Launceston.

An illustration of the naivety, gullibility or greed of some shareholders can be seen with John MacDonogh, a surgeon of Clapham, who owned 1000 shares. His call amount was 1000 x 2/6d i.e. $\pounds 125$ – which he could not pay. He claimed his medical income was up to £100 p.a. and associated income £235 p.a. Expenses for his family of 6 plus servant were not given but his other costs were $\pounds 169$ p.a. His house was rented. He was released from the £125 call provided he paid £50 plus costs to the Liquidator. One wonders how he paid the £875 when he was initially allotted the 1000 shares.

If only the company prospectus was available today Source – CRO, STA 40

Tuckingmill Fuse Factory

Reading the Principal's Report in the School of Mines Magazine, June 1962, I came across this:

Perhaps the most outstanding event of the past year was the magnificent gift by I.C.I. of their Roskear (sic) factory to us, due to their withdrawal from Camborne. It closed in July 1961. This we were unable to accept this is entirely due to our lack of financial resources.

One wonders what the School of Mines would have done with a redundant fuse factory if they had had the cash to maintain it.

Now that would have made an exciting preservation project!!

Ancient Iron Mining In Newquay by Frank Kneebone

Newquay is not the first place in Cornwall that comes to mind when discussing Cornish mining, however, there are at least fourteen named mines within the urban parish. There are also several ancient cliff mines worked from the beaches.

The principal minerals mined were led with varying amounts of silver, some copper and cobalt (on the periphery of the district) and iron. There are tin stream works close by exploiting tin which has washed down the river valleys from the Goss Moor area.

The richest mine was Newquay Silver and Lead Mine which has a documented history going back before the early fifteen hundreds. Because of the high silver content of this mine it was used to supply silver to reinforce the coinage during the reign of Queen Mary. Most of the silver/lead mines were promoted on their proximity to East Wheal Rose Mine where considerable amounts of profit were made in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Bill of Sale: Towan Blystra property of late Richard Lomax.

Valuable lodes of silver and lead intersect the manor, one valuable mine, called Newquay Silver and Lead Mine is now in the course of working with good prospects and is distance of only five miles from celebrated mine of East Wheal Rose whence the late Sir Charles Hawkins. Bart. Obtained such immense profits.

Subsequently bought by Trefry in 1838.

Towan Blystra was the old name for Newquay.

We tend to regard the district as relatively modern, but its occupation goes right back before the Bronze Age. There were several Bronze Age burial barrows locally which would suggest a sizable population. Just north of Newquay is Trevelgue Head / Porth Island which is an Iron Age fort of considerable size. In 1938-39 the fort was excavated and investigated by C.K. Croft Andrew of the embryonic Cornwall Archaeological Unit. Unfortunately, although the details were written up, the outbreak of war prevented them from being published. It was not until the 1990s that a grant was obtained whereby a full investigation of these papers was undertaken and published. On examination of these and more recent excavations it was established that as well as round houses and a burial site, there was discovered one of the earliest iron smelters in Cornwall. This smelter utilised the iron ore obtained from a narrow lode running inland from the base of the cliffs, with an estimated output of 20kg of iron per annum. Surprisingly, neither the early papers nor the later work included any details of the underground workings of the mine, which were easily accessible. If they had been studied, then some interesting features would have been revealed. When I explored the levels the very small pick points were clearly visible having a width of about 1/4 inch. Every metre throughout the mine were six-inch ledges cut into the walls for standing lamps, all with smoke staining, suggesting oil lamps of some kind reminiscent of an Aladdin's lamp. Unfortunately, entry is now prevented by permanent grills and the beach itself is closed because of instability of the cliffs.





End of Old Level

Refs. Cornwall C.A.U, Newquay Old Cornwall Society, J. Novakowski.

Progress at Great Condurrow Mine

The big project over the last year or so has been the building of the new surface workshop. This had been funded by the Sandy Wilson bequest

A reminder of the background. The late Sandy Wilson and his wife Rosemary were both great supporters of both King Edward Mine and Condurrow Mine. Sandy very generously left £20,000 in his will to be shared equally between the two sites. After his death the family came to Cornwall and Rosemary scattered Sandy's ashes by the ladder-way shaft at Condurrow. It was a special moment and is a moving thought that when we go underground perhaps we are carrying a little bit of Sandy with us on our boots. I think that he would have liked that.



Sandy & Rosemary Wilson - at KEM in 2008

The building was going to be similar to the existing winder house -20-ft x 10-ft, timber framed with corrugated iron cladding and a pitched roof. As Steve Polglase, one of the Condurrow volunteers, is an expert builder we decided to build it ourselves under his direction.

Initial excavation was carried out courtesy of our member Peter Sheppard, who sent his son, Ross, up with a digger. Concrete strip foundations were put in and block work brought up to floor level. Steve overestimated the number of blocks required – he had one and a half bricks left over! "*Just luck*" he said.





Back filling with waste rock

Pouring the concrete

Fortunately, when we came to pour the concrete, the mix truck was able to get down into the field which saved a lot of barrowing. The amount of concrete ordered was exactly right within a couple of domestic bucket-fulls. "*Just luck*" said Steve. I am not quite sure why it took twelve people, plus two with cameras, to lay the concrete. It was a good day.

Steve Polglase fabricated the framework in in his own home workshop. It was then erected onto the foundations. To our amazement (but not to Steve), when it was bolted together it fitted the foundations and was both level and square. This, like everything else, was not luck – this was skill! Today it is possible to order corrugated sheets cut to size and pre-painted. This made all the difference when Steve and Sid Geake clad the building.





Erecting the framework

Exterior cladding complete

Internally the insulation is complete and work has started on the internal cladding.

Welcome to New Members

The Committee wish to extend a warm welcome the following people as new or returning members of the Society:-

Mr Lew Murdoch, Mr Steve & Mrs Sue Fowler, Mr Ben Orton, Mr Robin Fowler, Mr Darren Neale, Mr Paul Richards, Mr Tom Harrison, Mr Hugh & Mrs Trish Browning, Mr Phillip Kalber, Doctor Frances Burrell, Mr Richard Dixon, Mr Steve Kingstone and Mr Richard Clemo.

It is hoped that they will enjoy their membership of our Society.

Bal Maidens Victorious, West Briton Newspaper, 5 Feb 1819

Contributed by Frank Kneebone

The country people in the neighbourhood of Padstow have been rather busily employed, for some time, in securing the part of the cargo of a vessel lately wrecked on their coast. On Wednesday evening last, a box of figs, part of this cargo, was discovered on St Minver Commons which gave rise to a serious affray between a party of damsels who were on the lookout for secreted plunder, and some bal maidens who were returning from a mine. The contest lasted for two hours in the course of which some of the combatants were reduced to a state of approaching nudity in the end the bal maidens were victorious and carried off the prize.

Where was this? By Tony Brooks



Answer – M.V. Baymead tin dredger coming into Hayle

Tailings from the mines around Camborne were discharged into the Red River. Below the mines a number of stream works reworked these tailings further to recover more of the fine tin. Their rejects were allowed to find their way to the sea. Ultimately these tailings were deposited in the seabed in St Ives Bay. In the mid-1960s Coastal Prospecting Ltd. did some preliminary trials using the M.V. Shamrock that was equipped with a small suction dredge and a spiral.



M.V. Shamrock



M.V. Baymead

In 1967-1968 the M.V. Baymead, a small oil-tanker converted into a suction dredger equipped with 96 spiral concentrators, dredged and processed off-shore tin. The dredged material containing an average of 0.2% tin was partially pre-concentrated on board before being delivered to a shore treatment plant

on Lelant or Dynamite Quay as it is known locally. This name came from a period of use when explosives from the National Explosives factory on Hayle Towans were shipped from here.

The treatment plant was a conventional gravity concentration plant and produced tin concentrates of about 30% Sn. Its tailings were pumped back on board and returned to the sea. In the best 28-day period of the summer of 1968, 2,270 tons of spiral concentrate were treated, producing 13.8 tons of dry concentrate of 30.8% tin concentrate. Technical problems of both dredging and treatment were successfully overcome; the operation proved uneconomic due largely to the shallow water by the quay which only permitted unloading at very high tide.

Where was this?



Programme 2019

- 29th June Field Trip to Devoran led by Nicholas Johnson. Meet at SW7902 3937 duration 10.30-13.00
- July 16th 'South Crofty, advancing towards production' by Steve Tarrant, Assistant Mine Manager.
- Sept 17th 'Some Mineral Specimens from Broken Hill, Zambia' by Tom Hawken.
- Sept 21st Members only An Open Morning at Great Condurrow.
- Oct 15th 'The Great Bonanza, Mining & Social History of the Comstock Lode in the USA' by exploration and mining geologist Derek Stonley.
- Nov 19th 'Devon Great Consuls' by writer and researcher Rick Stewart.
- Dec 10th Members Medley A selection of Members' items.

Articles, quips, drawings or ideas for future meetings to be with the Editor by 31st October. Publication is intended to be in the first week of December 2019. Without your support it is difficult to produce a good read. Send items to <u>t.pbrooks@talktalk.net</u> using the criteria on page 2 please.